



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/790,684	03/03/2004	Rainer Uhl	740105-89	2298

25570 7590 07/20/2006

ROBERTS, MLOTKOWSKI & HOBBS
P. O. BOX 10064
MCLEAN, VA 22102-8064

EXAMINER

LAUCHMAN, LAYLA G

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2877

DATE MAILED: 07/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/790,684

Applicant(s)

UHL ET AL.

Examiner

L. G. Lauchman

Art Unit

2877

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE ____ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 03 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/03/2004.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: In the Summary of the invention, [009], the reference to claim 1 should be deleted.

In [0029] the applicants refer to Figs. 5A and 5B. However, there is only a drawing with Fig.5. The same concerns Fig.1. Appropriate correction is required.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, in Claim 24, “a means for determining the intensity of the light for total internal reflection illumination of said sample, a means for determining the intensity of the light totally reflected by said sample and a control means” must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the

Art Unit: 2877

renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-27 are objected to because of the following informalities: Claims appears to be a literal translation into English from a foreign document and are replete with grammatical and idiomatic errors (specifically, see claims 4-8, 11, 14. Claim 8, line 2, has a typo "sai dsample." Claim 10 recites "a strip-like shape". It appears from the specifications that the applicants meant a slit-like shape.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 16-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Apparently, Claim 16 refers

to Figure 5 and paragraph [0029]. However, the Figure and the specifications do not explain how “said first area is capable of separating light emitted by said sample and passing through said excitation beam path in reverse direction from said excitation beam path or wherein said second area is capable of relaying light into the objective lens for epi-illumination of said sample.” The figure and the specification also fail to show “a distance between said optical axis of the objective lens and a periphery of said first area is selected such that light beams passing around periphery of said first area into the objective lens are imaged by the objective lens at angles onto said sample for which total reflection of these light beams occurs.”

Accordingly, claims 16-22 have not been treaded further on the merits.

Claim 1-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1 and 16 recites the limitation "said optical axis". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

In claim 11, the recitation “a second portion which is arranged point-symmetric regarding said first portion relative to said optical axis” is unclear. Claim 6 recite that “said first area is reflective for light”, however, from the drawings and the specifications, the first area (20,22) appears to be rather transmissive than reflective.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-15 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: As to Claim 1, the prior art of record taken along or in combination, fails to disclose or render obvious a coupling element arranged in a back focal plane of the objective lens or in a plane which is conjugate to said back focal plane; said coupling element comprising a first area for relaying light to the objective lens for total internal reflection illumination of said sample and a second area; wherein said second area is capable of separating light emitted by said sample and passing through said excitation beam path in reverse direction from said excitation beam path or said second area is capable of relaying light into an illumination path for epi-illumination of said sample or said second area is capable of both separating light emitted by said sample and passing through said excitation beam path in reverse direction from said excitation beam path and relaying light an illumination path for epi-illumination of said sample, in combination with the rest of the limitations of the claim.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to L. G. Lauchman whose telephone number is (571) 272-2418. The examiner's normal work schedule is 8:00am to 4:30pm (EST), Monday through Friday. If attempts to reach examiner by the telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor Gregory J. Toatley, Jr. can be reached on (571) 272-2059, ext. 77.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the TC receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-1562.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. G. Lauchman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

L. G. Lauchman
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2877

July 17, 2006